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Managing Knowledge Workers for Change Management Dimensions

C. Ramanigopal1* P.A. Joy2
1. Faculty of Management Studies, Vinayaka Missions University, Salem – 636 308. Tamil Nadu
2. Department of Commerce and Law, St. John's College, Dr. B.R.A. University, Agra.
* Email of corresponding author: ramanigopalsalem@gmail.com

Abstract
The knowledge economy requires a different contribution from human capital (i.e. knowledge workers). Knowledge workers are challenge seekers, have high enthusiasm for learning and prefer freedom and flexibility, so it would be wise to suggest that knowledge management should consider all these issues and try to provide opportunities to fulfill the current needs of knowledge workers in particular and the company in general. This paper aims to focus on how Knowledge Management practices, to make useful to change management. This study suggests that training was one of the most important factors for initiating knowledge management, together with support from the top management. Besides that, compensation and rewards, as expected, remain the preferred factors encouraging knowledge workers to share their knowledge and stay in the company. Therefore a more competitive compensation and rewards package should be offered specifically for workers, compensation packages that more fully appreciate knowledge workers' knowledge and skills would be most welcomed. This may be become a key factor for change management adoption as one of the dimension.
Keywords: Knowledge Management, Knowledge Worker, Change Management, Leadership, Innovative Knowledge

1. Introduction

Knowledge management continues to play an important role in management practice, in private and public organizations, in community informatics and in other groups. Once Knowledge Management was thought of as a fad, it is now clear that knowledge management is an important issue, which all organizations face and will continue to face for the foreseeable future. Knowledge management (KM) comprises a range of strategies and practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. Such insights and experiences comprise knowledge, either embodied in individuals or embedded in organizations as processes or practices. An established discipline since 1991, KM has been contributed by fields of business administration, information systems, management, and library and information sciences. More recently, other fields have started contributing to KM research; these include information and media, computer science, public health, and public policy. Many large companies and non-profit organizations have resources contributed and dedicated to internal KM efforts, often as a part of their business strategy, information technology, or human resource management departments. Several consulting companies also exist that provide strategy and advice regarding KM to these organizations.

Knowledge management efforts typically focus on organizational objectives such as improved performance, competitive advantage, innovation, the sharing of lessons learned, integration and continuous improvement of the organization. KM efforts overlap with organizational learning, and may be distinguished from that by a greater focus on the management of knowledge as a strategic asset and a focus on encouraging the sharing of knowledge. It is seen as an enabler of organizational learning and a more concrete mechanism than earlier research and its output in the respective field. Successful Knowledge Management system takes cultural changes and a change in the reward structures drive work in most companies. One has to gain the hearts and the minds of the works. They are not link troops but they are more like volunteers. Knowledge sharing cannot be mandated. The whole notion of sharing is what an employee knows diametrically opposite to the way in which reward structures in most companies work. Any Knowledge Management System needs a leader who will handle the show after implementation beings, as calls Knowledge Activitist (Noneka, 1998).

Today's emerging age of knowledge economy has created a new breed of company employees, whose Intellectual Capital (IC) is the accumulated experience, commitment, and potential for developing and maintaining the learning organization. Such a person is called Knowledge worker. He or she leverages technology to maximize efficiency and corporate success round the clock. The driver of success in the new knowledge economy is knowledge. It is imperative that people can earn a living by working with something as knowledge. In 1959, management expert Peter Drucker popularized the term Knowledge worker which was invented by Fritz Machlup, a Princeton economist (Peter Drucker, 2002). A separate person serving as the Chief

Knowledge Officer (CKO) might be justified in large Organizations, which is not always a requirement. But the ideal CKO always encompasses the role and not the persona with that title. He can be a senior manager. He should have fairly good understanding of the company's business model and driving technology enabler. The success of Knowledge Management system using CKO as an agent for selling foresight, selects one who can actually make a convincing case for Knowledge Management in front of Knowledge Sceptics.

2. Managing Change

Knowledge Management needs strong rewards. Knowledge sharing cannot be mandated; it can only be encouraged by complementary reward structures that encourage knowledge sharing and use. The success of Knowledge Management in any organization, irrespective of the size, depends on how well the knowledge champion brings all stakeholders, management, employees and sponsors together in agreement on beliefs and expectations.

Employees who will actually use the Knowledge Management system must have their expectations clearly laid out. Each employee must know why his or her opinions and contributions to the Knowledge Management system, as a whole, counts. Trust and cooperation are critical factors in the smooth integration of a Knowledge Management System into the firm's employee base and as a cultural whole (Hargadon, 1998) If a knowledge related role is assigned and results are expected, the CKO must ensure that employees are given the time to contribute to it as a part of their jobs (Devenport, 1998). It is CKO's responsibility to motivate employees to use and add value to the Knowledge Management system and in turn to the firm. Many organizations have successfully established this link. Knowledge building and knowledge sharing are considered critical for management as the company can successfully create knowledge linkages across the organization. For this reason, the contribution to such linkages is strongly linked to employee compensation.

The knowledge leader should also consider the relative stability of employees, their jobs, and modes of working. The figure No. 1.1 reveals how a Knowledge Management initiative leader can choose between learning and a sharing culture, although the two are not mutually exclusive. On one side of table the extent to which employee pool table is shown and it is shown at two levels for simplicity. Employees are either stable in their jobs or frequently change jobs. On the other side is the mode of working that company uses i.e., project oriented and function oriented.

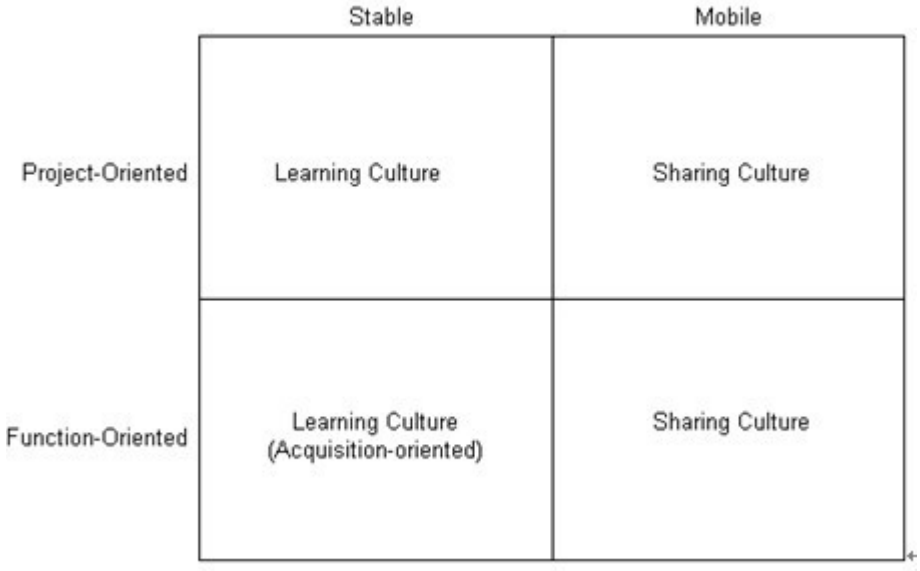

Figure 1: KM Leader Guide to Nurture Either A Learning or A Sharing Culture

A knowledge manager must try various methods that work best for the knowledge worker, especially in a team environment. Incentives should be linked to a team approach and awards should be used to recognize value-added work. Monetary rewards, bonus, and special prizes can be a hit with the winning team, especially when publicized through the company. In a project-oriented work environment, managers must promote development of "T-shaped skills (Hansen, 1999). Such skills are where individuals possess deep understanding of their own domain and possess sufficient knowledge of their peers' domain so as to be able to comprehend the value that they brings to their own contributions. Considering both these aspects together can guide the mangers about what is in the best interest of their organization, through not necessarily in the best interest of their employees.

3. Knowledge Workers

A knowledge worker is a person who transforms business and personal experience into knowledge. Usually a knowledge worker is found to be innovative, creative and is fully aware of the organizational culture. A knowledge worker can be thought of as a product of values, experiences, processes, education, and training. A knowledge worker knows what can actually be accomplished (Dove Rick, 2004).

Chief Information officer (CIO) has responsibilities of IT strategy, development of systems, connectivity, IT support, and general IT management. The CIO need not always be entrepreneurially oriented to be successful, but the same is not true for Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO). The CIO can rarely be both the CIO and CKO, but the characteristics underlying the CKO's roles are different. The individual holds the title of Best Practice Manager, Strategic Knowledge Manager, or Chief Executive Officer. The key roles that these individual play are still the same to make the Knowledge Management system and process as an integral part of regular daily work. Although there is often a CIO where there is a CKO, the reverse is not always true (Earl, 1999).

As an Organizational Expert: Major challenge to be faced by a CKO is convincing two distinct groups about the worth of the Knowledge Management. Between the management and the knowledge workers, CKO will act as a bridge for the effective implementation of Knowledge Management. In the aspect of management CKO has to convince as if the Knowledge Management project will payback finance invested on it. In the aspect of knowledge workers, KM will not be painful. CKO should be capable enough to convince these two groups whenever there is a conflict. In simple, CKO serves the purpose of organizational glue that brings these groups together. Organizations preparing their human capital to be knowledge workers in a competitive environment must consider several core competencies of the self directed knowledge worker. The core competencies are.

Thinking skills: A knowledge worker is expected to possess vision of how the product can be better, how the improvement can be and how to add value-added contributions of its employees and how continuous learning contributes to a knowledge worker's career, loyalty to the firm and satisfaction on the jobs. This is also called strategic thinking. Innovative teams Organizations' should have an innovative team work and joint decision making for solutions to be more competitive. Continuous learning: In professional words, "Learning is about working and working is about learning" (Frank, 2004). Hence the employees must learn continuously to upgrade their knowledge.

Innovation/Creativity: The spirit behind innovation and creativity for knowledge workers is to expand their vision and dream of a new or a different product or service for the advancement of the firm.

Responsibility: When the problem arises, a knowledge worker is expected to take the problem to a responsible source and discuss or brainstorm it, to settle on a best solution.

Decisive action taking: Knowledge workers should be willing to embrace professional discipline, patience, and determination. Motivation is a critical factor in keeping the focus on a product or a service for the future. Analyzing and choosing among the alternatives needs testing and the selling of change must come before final adoption (Garfinckle Joel, 2004).

3.1 Business Roles in Learning Organization

A Learning organization is an organization of people with total commitment to improve their capacity to create or to produce. It can respond to uncertainty to challenges in specific and to the change in general. The rate of learning of an organization can turn out to be the most critical source of competitive advantage. A learning organization is a group of people continually enhancing their capacity to create what they want to create. It is an organization with an ingrained philosophy for anticipating, reacting, and responding to change, complexity, and uncertainty.

3.2 Management and Leadership

In Knowledge Management, there are differences between managers and leaders. Traditional managers usually focus on the present. They are usually action-oriented and spend most of the time in supervising, delegating, controlling, and ensuring compliance with set procedures. Traditional managers were once workers and were promoted as managers. When they manage subordinates, they are aware of each aspect of the business since they were once there. Smart managers usually focus on organizational learning in order to ensure operational excellence. Smart managers can not be expected to have mastered the work of the subordinates. They can take on the role of leaders where change is the primary goal. The challenge is to get the organization moving towards achieving goals.

The leader's role in a learning organization is more of a facilitator than a supervisor. He acts more like a teacher than like an order giver. In case of teaching, the focus is on the transfer of knowledge from the instructor to the learner. The instructor is supposed to be the expert and his/her role is to deliver quality content and to communicate the content with potential. Learning should essentially promote a way of thinking, not just convey facts. In a learning organization, the smart manager can play the role of the instructor and the knowledge

workers can play the role of learners. The smart manager provides opportunities for knowledge workers to brainstorm ideas, exchange knowledge, and come up with new and better ways of doing business.

3.4 Chief Knowledge Officer

The ideal CKO always encompasses the definition of the role and not the person with that title. It can be an existing senior manager, the Chief Executive Officer or even the Chief Information Officer. The CKO should have a fairly good understanding of the company's business model and driving technology enablers.

The CKO focuses on correcting the knowledge flow and eliminating related deficiencies and inefficiencies that exist within the company. The Chief Knowledge Officers' job description are optimizing process design for KM, creating channels, integrating KM, breaking barriers and eliminating impediments, watching the learning loop, creating financial and competitive value, and supporting IT and eliminating knowledge flow gaps. The leader of a KM walks in the following role shoes such as championing, educating users, educating the management team, measuring the impact of KM, mapping and defragmenting existing Knowledge, creating the technology channel and integrating business processes.

CKO as Organizational Glue: The primary job description and a major challenge are convincing the two distinct groups about the value of KM. Management and knowledge workers are the two groups who will actually use KM as a part of their work. Management needs to be convinced that KM will have a financial payback and will not turn in to a financial block hole. Employees need to be convinced that Knowledge management will not be yet another pain in the neck, akin to project charts, fill-in grids, time sheets, or code check-in/check-out procedures. Persuasive arguments required to convince these two groups that there will be no conflict. Chief Knowledge Officer serves the purpose of bringing these groups together, as organizational glue.

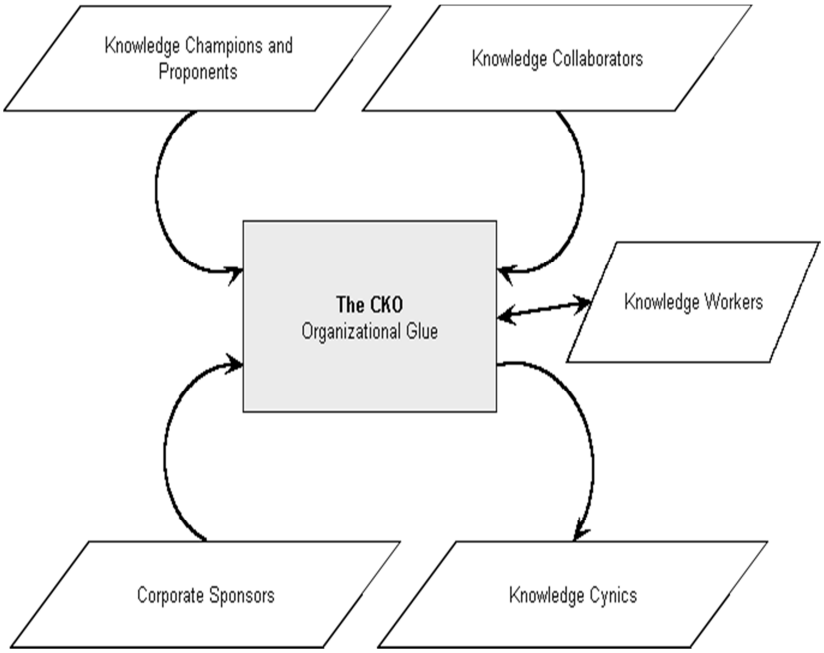

Figure 2: The CKO as the Organizational Glue

The figure No. 2 shows some of the people in the management and user community that a Chief Knowledge Officer needs to unite. The CKO is the organizational glue that binds five distinct groups to Knowledge Management. The Directions of the arrows show support or opposition to Knowledge Management in general. One side, there are the champions who believe in Knowledge Management and are willing to stand behind it. The CKO fall into this group. Apart from this, there is one core group with whom a CKO needs to collaborate. These are the knowledge collaboration that often include IT staff, intranet zealors, human resources mangers, and occasionally, department technical heads. Only rarely do collaborators come from outside the organization and also external consultants.

Aside from knowledge champions, corporate sponsors and adherents are the knowledge cynics who do not agree on the value of Knowledge Management. Although having a few cynics is perhaps a good thing. Too many can hinder the Knowledge Management initiative. Without brining all these stakeholders together on common ground, a Chief Knowledge Officers cannot even begin to put Knowledge management policies and processes in plan.

4. Work Adjustments

Work Adjustment is an individual model that prescribes achieving and monitoring correspondence between an employee's vocational needs and reinforces of the job. Smart managers should ensure the right match between the vocational needs of their knowledge workers and the requirements of their jobs. The aim is to assure the stability of the workforce and continuity on the job. Achieving and maintaining correspondence with the work environment can be viewed as basic motives of human work behavior. Correspondence starts when an individual bring certain skills that enable him/her to respond to the requirements of the job or the work environment. On the other hand, the work environment provides certain rewards in response to the individual's requirements. When both the individual's and the work environment's minimal requirements are mutually fulfilled, the correspondence exists. When an individual achieves minimal correspondence, he/she is allowed to stay on the job and have an opportunity to work towards a more optimal correspondence.

Smart Leadership Requirements: Every knowledge work needs smart leadership that can facilitate effective use of knowledge, when time and timing becomes critical in the competitive environment, to handle smart people. The knowledge chain represents a series of steps which determines the potential of a learning organization. One approach involves steps such as assessment of the core competency of the organization, response to organization's internal shortcomings, excellent knowledge of the external market and the nature of competition in the market, online response to company's external environment and measuring the return on time.

5. Technologies

The primary activities of knowledge work include assessment, decision making, monitoring and scheduling. A knowledge worker can act as a manager, a supervisor, or a clerk who is actively engaged in thinking, information processing, analyzing, creating, or recommending procedures based on experience and cumulative knowledge. IT plays a key role in the learning organization in the processes such as knowledge capture, information distribution, and information interpretation.

A knowledge worker is someone who uses IT in conducting day-to-day business and one that has direct impact on the efficiency and productivity of the job and the work process (Awad, 1996). There exists a multitude of equipments and software supporting the knowledge worker's tasks. They include E-mail, LAN, and Intelligent Workstations. Intelligent workstations automate the repetitive and tedious tasks. They should perform the functions such as administrative support functions, personal computing functions and managing intelligent databases.

Most people have an innate ability for problem-solving. However, routine activities often make it difficult to concentrate on the creative phase of problem solving. Such situation can be improved in an IT environment that provides knowledge based retrieval system that generates knowledge ideas quickly, interactive functions to derive feasible solutions, functions to communicate a knowledge worker's activities to the appropriate people at the appropriate time via technology such as email and an intranet. IT plays a role in the learning organization in three key processes. They are knowledge capture, information distribution, and information interpretation. In knowledge capture, the place for IT is in market research and competitive intelligence systems. Scenario planning tools can be employed to generate the possible futures (Malhotra, 1986). But, the mere availability of technology does not assure a learning organization a success. The ultimate goal of technology is to serve organizational memory and to create a working environment that provides these conditions.

6. Conclusion

The learning organization depends on the knowledge worker to synthesize the information and develop conclusions. With the knowledge worker time at a premium, learning originations are offering flexible schedules through telecommuting. A knowledge worker is expected to possess professional experience and technical know how in order to access, update and disseminate information and ideas from databases and knowledge bases. The computer should be owned by the knowledge worker rather than by the organization. Knowledge worker should also be capable to take their computer one job to another. One would expect them to customize and handle jobs within their range of experience. Technology plays a major role in knowledge work. It facilitates information availability and information processing for creative thinking and intuitive planning. The use of tools can facilitate information distribution and interpretation. With technology in mind, a knowledge worker is expected to possess professional experience and technical know-how to access, update, and disseminate information and ideas from databases and knowledge bases. The hardest part comes after the Knowledge management system is built. This involves the cultural changes needed in the company's work processes to make Knowledge Management acceptable as a way of work life for both company's knowledge workers and managers.

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C.S. Ramanigopal is a Professor in Faculty of Management Studies under Vinayaka Missions University, Salem, Tamil Nadu. He completed his graduation from Madras University and Master graduation from Periyar University, Salem. He holds a Ph.D., in Knowledge Management from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University, Agra. He has interest in self development and the Placement Training. He has Industrial Experience and Academic Experience in various capacities. He served in Alemaya University, Ethiopiua under United Nations Development Projects. He got excellence of the year award in 1998 from NIIT Ltd., New Delhi, for outstanding performance at country level as a centre head. He is a versatile scholar and authored many books & Journals.

P.A. Joy presently working in St. John's College Agra affiliated to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University – Agra, having 20 years of teaching experience and 5 years of Industrial Experience. He had served in Alemaya University, Ethiopia under United Nations Development Project - as assistant Professor. He has sound knowledge in Cost accounts, and Auditing, as a Practitioner before commencing his career in Academic.